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Quality Standards for Educational Psychology Services



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Introduction

The following Quality Standards for Educational Psychology Services (EPSs) are the product of a working group first set up by the Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP) in 1997. That group included principal educational psychologists (PEPs), tutors on programmes for the Initial training of educational psychologists (EPs), an Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and representatives from the Association of Black Psychologists and the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP).

The various versions of the DECP quality standards have been reviewed several times (2000, 2003, 2006), but the current version has been reviewed and extended by the West Midlands Regional Association of PEPs and we are grateful to all those individuals and services who have at various times assisted in the work involved in producing these standards. This final version has benefitted from comments received following a pilot undertaken by EPSs paired with an external partner who used these quality standards to assess their own services. An additional standard has been added in relation to Assistant EPs.

The clear and overall aim in producing these standards has been to promote the highest possible quality of EPSs. The standards are not intended to be prescriptive nor limiting. Neither has it been the intention to produce a set of standards that may be 'passed' only in their entirety. Rather it is anticipated that the standards provide some indicators of how a quality service may be identified. It is hoped that this document will serve as a substantive guide for EPSs wishing to undertake their own self-evaluation of the quality and consistency of the service.

This document provides the basis for the inspection of an EPS, including a self-assessment process, a moderated inspection process and a three-year validation of service quality standards. Evidence can be collected from a range of sources, including service evaluations, satisfaction surveys, performance data, compliments and complaints from service users. Trainee EPs should only be asked to complete appropriate sections.

Table 1: Ten areas of service functioning

1	Professional practice
2	Leadership
3	Service structure and staffing
4	Induction
5	Continuing professional development
6	Professional supervision of assistant educational psychologists
7	Professional supervision of trainee educational psychologists
8	Appraisal
9	Supervision
10	Ethical practice, including trading and commissioning

Scoring hierarchy

Each criteria can be scored:

- 4 – (Blue) Outstanding;
- 3 – (Green) Good;
- 2 – (Amber) Satisfactory/requires further development;
- 1 – (Red) Weak/needs immediate action.

The following table shows the scoring hierarchy.

Number	Colour	Judgment	Descriptor
4	Blue	Outstanding	An area whereby a service can demonstrate that it achieves 'best in class' and can further demonstrate, with evidence, that it leads to improved outcomes for children, adolescents and young adults.
3	Green	Good	An area that functions well that produces outcomes where children, adolescents and young adults achieve consistently. A service improvement cycle is evident.
2	Amber	Satisfactory (and requires further development)	An area that is fit for purpose but needs to be reviewed if student outcomes are to be further improved. Some progress is evident and a service improvement cycle is in place.
1	Red	Weak (and needs immediate action)	An area that needs to be extensively redeveloped. It might be that it was 'good' practice some years ago but that it is now not fit for purpose. Essentially, it does not support improved outcomes for children, adolescents and young adults.

The scoring hierarchy provides a framework for judging practices, policy and the managerial procedures associated with EPSs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Each criterion should be judged using the scoring hierarchy.

The standards

1. Professional practice

Guidelines for professional practice within an EPS should contain the following elements:

Core standard	Service's own rating	Sources of evidence
1(a) Description of the EPS and links to the local offer.		
1(b) Definition of the objectives of the service and how these relate to the LA's policies.		
1(c) A clear rationale for activities which is based in sound psychological theory and research.		
1(d) An evaluation of the effectiveness of service delivery and how this is used to inform future planning.		
1(e) An outline of how service delivery is implemented.		
1(f) Clearly defined service procedures.		
1(g) A description of the structure of the service.		
1(h) A description of the service's standards.		
1(i) Child centred practice and informed consent is at the heart of professional practice.		
1(j) Parents and carers are meaningfully and actively involved in any work undertaken by EPs.		
1(k) EP written records are provided in accessible and clear language.		

2. Leadership

A leadership framework within an EPS should contain the following elements:

Core standard	Service's own rating	Sources of evidence
2(a) Aims, values and policies influence the work of all staff and form the basis of shared values.		
2(b) A positive ethos which reflects the service's commitment to high achievements for all, an effective learning environment, good relationships and equality of opportunity.		
2(c) Clear objectives and policies, focused on the needs of children and young people, which give a positive direction to the service's work.		
2(d) Leadership is developed and encouraged at all levels, with shared decision making and collaborative planning.		
2(e) Psychology is applied to make a difference to the lives of children and young people.		
2(f) A capacity to manage change supported by user feedback to further improve performance.		

3. Service structure and staffing

Guidelines for Service Structure and Staffing within an EPS should contain the following elements:

Core standard	Service's own rating	Sources of evidence
3(a) A staffing structure chart that is available for scrutiny.		
3(b) The EPS is led by a PEP who ensures leadership and managerial supervision for all EPs		
3(c) The EPS has specialists with specific responsibilities / competencies that disseminate complex psychological knowledge.		
3(d) High quality training placements are offered.		
3(e) All EPs are registered with the HCPC and follow professional standards.		

4. Induction

A scheme for Induction within an EPS should contain the following elements:

Core standard	Service's own rating	Sources of evidence
4(a) An expression of commitment to the principle that all new employees and those transferring to new areas of work will be given induction training which is relevant to their role.		
4(b) A clearly described induction process, within which there is flexibility so that each element of the programme can be adapted, through negotiation, to the needs of any newly appointed EP.		
4(c) A specific time allocation for induction activities across the first year for newly qualified EPs and across the induction period specified by the service for other newly appointed staff.		
4(d) All staff are kept up to date with safeguarding procedures and action required.		

5. Continuing professional development

A scheme for continuing professional development (CPD) within an EPS should contain the following elements:

Core standard	Service's own rating	Sources of evidence
5(a) A statement of entitlement to continuing professional development in line with HCPC standards.		
5(b) All EPs are expected to follow professional development with reference to HCPC guidelines for practitioner psychologists.		
5(c) A process which allows for CPD activities to be monitored and evaluated. This can be at a service level but must always be at an individual level, including the use of a CPD personal record or log.		
5(d) A description of how continuing professional development dovetails with other forms of support within the service (e.g. induction, supervision, appraisal and performance review).		
5(e) Investment in evidence-based training that delivers positive outcomes for children and young people.		

6. Professional supervision of assistant educational psychologists

Guidelines on the supervision of Assistant EPs and the work that they undertake contains the following elements:

Core standard	Service's own rating	Sources of evidence
6(a) All placement supervisors are HCPC registered EPs and have at least two years post-qualification experience.		
6(b) Full-time Assistant EPs receive a minimum of 1.5 hours supervision per week.		
6(c) Assistant EPs carry out a range of duties for which they are suitably skilled/have relevant knowledge and experience.		
6(d) Positive action is taken to support Assistant EPs in gaining places on the doctoral training programme. Examples include shadowing experiences, providing CPD opportunities and working in a range of contexts.		

7. Professional supervision of trainee educational psychologists

A scheme for the professional supervision of Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs) within an EPS will relate closely with the training programme's own standards and procedures and contain the following elements:

Core standard	Service's own rating	Sources of evidence
7(a) All placement supervisors are HCPC registered EPs and have at least two years post-qualification experience.		
7(b) A commitment to progress review meetings between TEPs, course tutors and placement supervisors, including feedback from at least monthly observation of a range of activities undertaken by the TEP. This will ensure that a range of experiences are made available to the TEP that allows them to gather evidence that demonstrates the achievement of the relevant competencies.		
7(c) All supervisors to attend supervision training to ensure their competence in providing supervision.		
7(d) An entitlement to a level of supervision consistent with BPS requirements.		

8. Appraisal and performance review

A scheme for appraisal and performance review for individuals within an EPS should contain the following elements:

Core standard	Service's own rating	Sources of evidence
8(a) A statement of purpose and expected outcomes of appraisal and performance review.		
8(b) Details of explicit and agreed performance measures which relate directly to service objectives.		
8(c) A description of the processes of appraisal and performance review including arrangements for preparation and recording.		
8(d) Frameworks used to guide appraisal and performance review meetings.		
8(e) Details of the responsibilities of the people involved in undertaking appraisal.		
8(f) Details of how the systems for appraisal and performance review will be monitored and evaluated.		

9. Supervision

A scheme for Supervision within an EPS should contain the following elements:

Core standard	Service's own rating	Sources of evidence
9(a) A statement of the purpose, scope and expected outcomes of supervision.		
9(b) A description of the processes of supervision, including arrangements for preparation and recording.		
9(c) An expression of the commitment to the principle that all EPs will have access to supervision and a specific time allocation to enable this to occur.		
9(d) A description of the framework and models used to guide supervision meetings.		
9(e) Details of the responsibilities of the people involved.		
9(f) Details of how processes and outcomes of supervision will be monitored and evaluated.		
9(g) EPs who deliver therapeutic interventions are supervised by those experienced in the therapeutic approach. This may include peer supervision.		

10. Ethical practice, including trading and commissioning

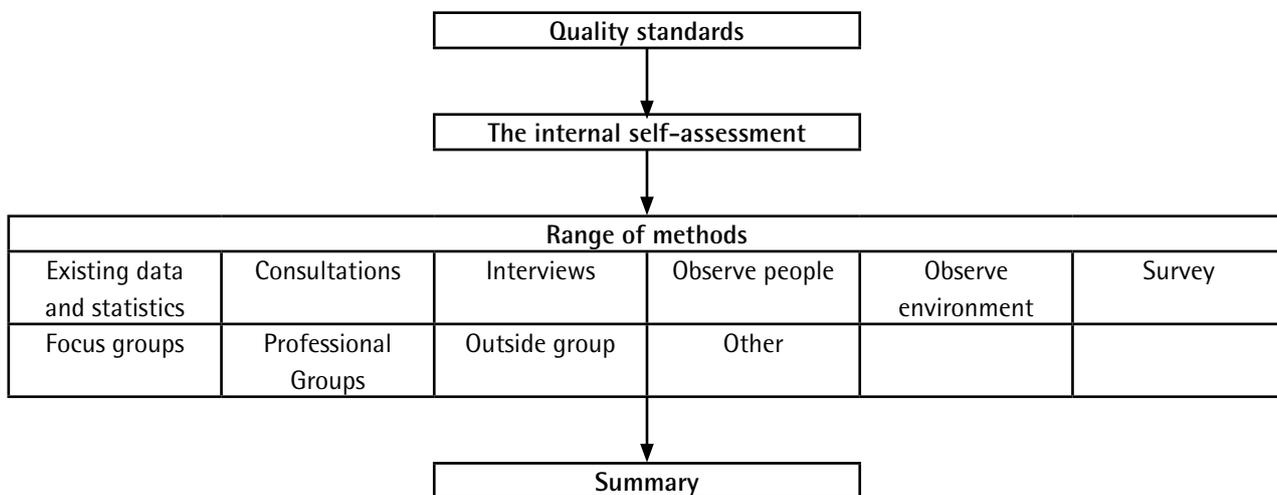
Guidelines on the ethics of trading within an EPS should contain the following elements:

Core standard	Service's own rating	Sources of evidence
10(a) EPS ensures their systems are effective in delivering the core services to the neediest families, services and children, including those supported by the statutory processes. Traded services ensure continuing access.		
10(b) EPS work with children, young people and their families is linked to universal settings. Schools are the main service delivery centres, but also colleges and early years settings. The core service will focus on developing effective systems in universal settings, with the provision of needs-led targeted and specialist interventions.		
10(c) EPS can demonstrate effective use of resources and consideration of value for money.		
10(d) EPS actively supports ways to improve local provision to meet the needs of children and young people within the local authority.		
10(e) EPS plans how to reinvest any additional income, including that from traded services, to improve the quality of the EPS.		
10(f) EPS can demonstrate an action research or evidence-based approach to improving outcomes and making a difference to the quality of lives of children, young people and their families.		
10(g) EPS is linked to a clear point of access and to care pathways, which avoids any duplication and overlap of psychology services.		
10(h) An emphasis on early intervention – early not only in terms of age of the young person, but also in terms of onset of any issue.		
10(i) All traded activity concentrates on the home local authority, including with respect to cross-border agreements.		

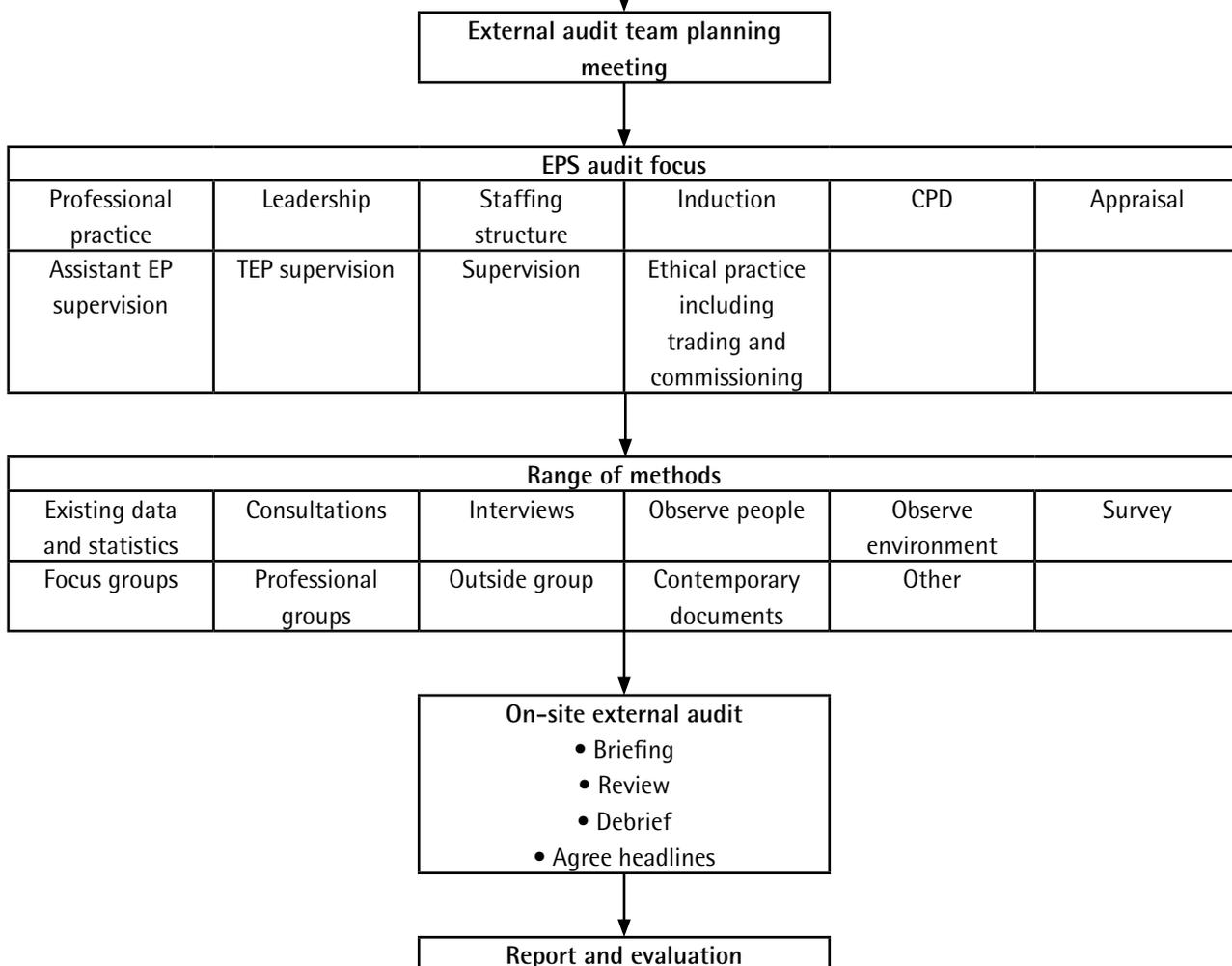
Methodology for use of quality standards within and without educational psychology services

Figure 1: The audit process

Phase 1:



Phase 2:



Learning conversation: The Quality Standards Framework should be used as an A3-sized presentation to facilitate two or more colleagues working together to form an initial focused judgement. Professional judgements form the basis of the process. Colleagues can be faced with the problem of 'you don't know what you don't know' – but by building trust and sharing good practice across regional groups of EPSs new insights can emerge that inform service improvement initiatives ensuring outstanding practice.

Sources of evidence: These can be varied; for example, they might include: results of questionnaires and surveys; direct observation; interviews; external viewpoints; informal and privileged knowledge.

Confidentiality: Within a regional collaborative learning community it is crucial that a high level of confidentiality is established and maintained. This contributes to the creation of trust, which underpins the confidence to share vital information in a non-defensive manner, ensuring that the collaborative process is open to learning. Thus, within the collaborative process it is expected that a high level of confidentiality will be maintained.

Phase 1: The internal self-assessment

Following the initial professional reflections and hypotheses, the self-assessment should be undertaken internally within the service in order to ascertain a range of internal judgements. This should be co-ordinated by a named person who has the authority to ask staff to participate in the self-assessment, examine all documents and observe all areas of service life. This may require an honest, candid, and occasionally a painful collective reflection if an authentic, relevant and valuable assessment is to be gained.

The general principle of consulting as widely and as reasonably as possible should be a governing value in order to gain a representative overview of the service's community. Obviously, this should be off-set against the time that is available.

Once the named person has gained a representative overview of that which they believe reflects the strengths and weaknesses of the service, the scoring of the audit should be undertaken. It is recommended that this is completed within the structure of a learning conversation with an experienced and senior member of staff within the service, who will be trusted to support an honest and constructive view of the service in relation to its functioning.

Practice has demonstrated that a highly effective strategy for examining the strengths and weaknesses of the service is to present the outcomes of the initial self-assessment to the senior leadership team. By discussing the initial findings it is possible to highlight issues within the leadership team as well as the service as a whole.

Phase 2: The external partner audit

Introduction

The results of internal self-assessment (Phase 1) will guide the initial discussions leading to an agreed focus for Phase 2, the collaborative audit. The named person should provide a brief introduction of the overall findings and highlight some of the methods used to gather information and any factors that might affect the reliability or validity of the data.

Ground rules for collaboration:

- All information is considered strictly confidential.
- A balance between positive affirmation and constructive challenges will be maintained at all times.

- The named person has the right to defer answers to questions.
- A spirit of support, trust and learning must be engendered at all times, especially where the information is clearly sensitive.
- If any aspect of practice is identified that causes concern, the named person should consult with PEP.

Step 1: Summarising the findings from the self-assessment

The named person should provide a brief summary of the findings from the internal audit and draw attention to the overall scores and the strengths and weakness of the service in relation to service functioning.

The named person should provide a quick overview of the type of methodology that was used to provide the evidence that supported the judgements to the external audit team.

Finally, the named person should indicate to the external audit team the areas they would like them to focus on. It is important to note that the collaborative review is driven by the service improvement process rather than an OfSTED type inspection. Thus, the named person maintains a central position guiding the external audit.

Step 2: Scanning and initial focusing

Colleagues should familiarise each other with their own initial reactions to how the service has scored each criteria and seek to clarify any unexpected scores. This initial focussing process serves to attune the external audit team to the strengths and areas for improvement.

Step 3: Strengths and areas for improvement

Colleagues should where possible come to an agreement on the strengths and areas for improvement from the internal self-assessment by constructively probing a selection of the judgements. If there is disagreement regarding whether the criteria under consideration is a strength/area for development this should be noted at this stage so that the named person can undertake further action if necessary

The initial learning conversations should be considered to be 'illuminative' and 'illustrative', in that they provide a point of reflection for the host service.

Step 4a: Collaborative review judgements

Members of the EPS team should examine each section of the Quality Standards Framework in turn and begin to plan the foci of the collaborative review.

During the course of the self-assessment the EPS team should finalise the areas to focus on and agree on a suitable range of methodologies and apportion these to colleagues undertaking specific audit activities.

The aim of the external assessment is to 'verify' and 'validate' the judgements from the self-assessment. Remember that we are looking to establish a high level collaborative learning experience that will motivate the service to develop and make improvements on their journey to support improved service outcomes.

Step 4b: Planning the external audit

Colleagues within the EPS team should agree on roles, areas of focus and the review methodology in order to gather evidence.

Step 4c: On-site recording

The aim is to record key points rather than detailed verbatim transcripts. Notes can include codes, keywords, quotes and figures for future reference. This data will be used to establish the service improvement plan.

Scoring

Step 5: Initial scoring

Each criterion can be scored:

'4' (Blue) Outstanding;

'3' (Green) Good;

'2' (Amber) Satisfactory / requires further development;

'1' (Red) Weak /Needs immediate action.

The following table shows the scoring hierarchy.

Table 1: The scoring hierarchy for the deep quality standards

Number	Colour	Judgment	Descriptor
4	Blue	Outstanding	An area whereby a service can demonstrate that it achieves 'best in class' and can further demonstrate, with evidence, that it leads to improved outcomes for children, adolescents and young adults.
3	Green	Good	An area that functions well that produces outcomes where children, adolescents and young adults achieve consistently. A service improvement cycle is evident.
2	Amber	Satisfactory (and requires further development)	An area that is fit for purpose but needs to be reviewed if student outcomes are to be further improved. Some progress is evident and a service improvement cycle is in place.
1	Red	Weak (and needs immediate action)	An area that needs to be extensively redeveloped. It might be that it was 'good' practice some years ago but that it is now not fit for purpose. Essentially, it does not support improved outcomes for children, adolescents and young adults.

Step 6: Calculating the scores

Calculate the total score for each column on the evidence sheet.

Calculate the overall score for each section (see below). This will be entered into profile summary table (as outlined below).

Step 7: Calculate the average for the summary profile (worked example)

Calculating 'the total of total scores' (found on the A3 summary sheet) is simply based on averages.

Once you have calculated the total for the total scores then divide this score by the number of entries. This calculation will provide an overall average for the standard (e.g. structure and staffing, to be entered into the profile table; see Step 8, p.21).

In the worked example (below) there are 50 entries (10 per element x 5 elements = 50). If the total of the total scores had been 162 divided by 50 (total entries) the rating for the section would be calculated as $162 / 50 = 3.24$. This would mean that section 3 is rated as 'good'.

The final rating score is entered into the profile summary table that provides a visual summary of the strengths and areas for development within the service.

Worked example: Structure and staffing

Table 2: Worked example for structure and staffing

Number	Description	1	2	3	4
1	3(a) A staffing structure chart is available for scrutiny	1	2	4	3
2	3(b) The EPS is led by a principal educational psychologist who ensures leadership and managerial supervision for all educational psychologists	0	3	5	2
3	3(c) The EPS has specialists with specific responsibilities/competencies that disseminate complex psychological knowledge	1	2	3	4
4	3(d) High quality training placements are offered	0	1	4	5
5	3(e) All educational psychologists are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council and follow professional standards				10
Total scores		2	16	48	96

The shaded columns are fixed entities and do not need to be altered.

- Enter the total score for each of the nine sections in column 'U'.
- Divide the total score by the number in column 'V'.
- Enter this total in column 'W'.

Table 3: Calculating the overall summary score

			U	V	W
	Standard	No. of elements	Enter Total Scored	Divided by the number of entries	Rating
1	Professional practice	11			
2	Leadership	6			
3	Service structure and staffing	5			
4	Induction	4			
5	Continuing professional development	5			
6	Professional supervision of Assistant EPs	4			
7	TEP supervision	4			
8	Appraisal and performance review	6			
9	Supervision	7			
10	Ethical practice, including trading and commissioning	9			

Calculating 'U'

This is the total of the total scores presented in each of the 10 standards at the bottom of each column on the A3 summary sheet (see worked example above). The total number of entries is multiplied by the rating for that column (i.e. 1, 2, 3 or 4). For example, if there are 10 entries in the '3' (rating) column, the sum is 30 for that column.

Calculating 'V'

The total number of entries for each section are entered into this column. For example, if 10 people each respond and there are 4 elements, this equal 40 responses.

Calculating 'W'

The final rating for each section is calculated by dividing 'U' score by the 'V' score. In the worked example, 'U' is 162 and 'V' is 50 leading to rating score of '3.24'.

Table 4: Example showing the 'total scored' (U) and the summary score (W)

			U	V	W
	Standard	N of elements	Enter Total Scored	Divided by the number of entries	Rating
1	Professional practice	11			
2	Leadership	6			
3	Service structure and staffing	5	162	50	3.24
4	Induction	4			
5	Continuing professional development	5			
6	Professional supervision of Assistant EPs	4			
7	TEP supervision	4			
8	Appraisal and performance review	6			
9	Supervision	7			
10	Ethical practice, including trading and commissioning	9			

Step 8: Profile summary table

Enter the summary scores ('W') into the summary table and shade the table's cells to correspond with the score. Place the 'W' score into the column.

Interrogate the summary table regarding the profile of strengths and areas for development.

Table 5: Ratings entered into 'W' column

	QSP framework section	W	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	Trend analysis
1	Professional practice									
2	Leadership									
3	Service structure and staffing	3.24								
4	Induction									
5	Continuing professional development									
6	Professional supervision of Assistant EPs									
7	TEP supervision									
8	Appraisal and performance review									
9	Supervision									
10	Ethical practice, including trading and commissioning									

Table 6: Colour bandings for the profile summary table

Score	Colour	Shading
3.5–4.0	Blue	
2.5–3.0	Green	
1.5–2.0	Amber	
1.0	Red	

Table 7: Example of a completed profile summary table (illustration)

	QSP framework section	W	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	Trend analysis
1	Professional practice	2.50								
2	Leadership	2.00								
3	Service structure and staffing	3.24								
4	Induction	1.50								
5	Continuing professional development	4.00								
6	Professional supervision of Assistant EPs	N/A								
7	TEP supervision	2.50								
8	Appraisal and performance review	1.00								
9	Supervision	2.00								
10	Ethical practice, including trading and commissioning	2.50								
	Average score									

Step 9: Trend analysis

The trend analysis is arrived at by discussion, balancing objective and subjective information to arrive at a consensus about the direction of travel (e.g. improving/worsening/flat lining).

Trend judgement and analysis

Use the trend scores as a starting point and decide on which of the following four categories apply to each section. The trend judgement and analysis aims to capture the 'direction of travel' for a particular section of the audit: worsening, not moving, improving and embedded.

You need to decide on the direction of travel and verify that with colleagues against your evidence base.

Table 8: Colour coding for trend judgements

	Trend judgement	Colour code
1	Worsening	Red
2	Flat lining (no evidence of improvement)	Yellow
3	Improvement	Green
4	Improvement has been sustained for three or more terms	Blue

Table 9: Trend analysis and the completed colour coding (illustration)

	QSP framework section	W	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	Trend analysis
1	Professional practice	2.50								
2	Leadership	2.00								
3	Service structure and staffing	4.00								
4	Induction	1.50								
5	Continuing professional development	4.00								
6	Professional supervision of Assistant EPs	N/A								
7	TEP supervision	2.50								
8	Appraisal and performance review	1.00								
9	Supervision	2.00								
10	Ethical practice, including trading and commissioning	2.50								
	Average score									

Table 10: Profile summary table: Results (enter your results and trend analysis)

	QSP framework section	W	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	Trend analysis
1	Professional practice									
2	Leadership									
3	Service structure and staffing									
4	Induction									
5	Continuing professional development									
6	Professional supervision of Assistant EPs									
7	TEP supervision									
8	Appraisal and performance review									
9	Supervision									
10	Ethical practice, including trading and commissioning									
	Average score									

Notes

Notes

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